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Bay State Basics

A Student Guide to Living in Massachusetts

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GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

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Published by
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Secretary of the Commonwealth
Citizen Information Service

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updated 9/23/98

A Message from the Secretary of the Commonwealth

Dear Student:

Thank you for choosing Massachusetts as the place to continue your education. With over 150 public and private institutions of higher learning and a combined student population of a half million, our Commonwealth is recognized worldwide for its academic heritage and reputation. Indeed, the intellectual and cultural energy generated by students adds immeasurably to the character, economy, and quality of life in the Bay State.

Your college experience will not be limited to spending time in lecture halls, libraries, or on the internet. Massachusetts is an outstanding place to work, to play, to travel throughout, and to live. It's even a great place to own a business. As a result, you will need essential information about transportation, landlord/tenant regulations, voter registration, and numerous other practical matters that affect your daily lives.

This booklet, "*A Student Guide To Living in Massachusetts*", has been prepared by my office to provide you with much of the useful information you will need as Massachusetts collegians. Use the contact numbers within this document to call any of the specific divisions of my office.

College life in Massachusetts will be an exciting and rewarding experience for you. Enjoy it, and keep "*A Student Guide To Living in Massachusetts*" as one of your guides to practical knowledge about our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

William Francis Galvin

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Be sure to visit our web site at **www.state.ma.us/sec**

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Citizen Information Service

For more than 20 years, Citizen Information Service (CIS) has made state government more accessible to residents of the Commonwealth. It has responded to nearly two million telephone inquiries, and has been able to provide immediate answers to approximately 99 percent of those calls.

CIS functions as the primary information and referral agency for the state, and is also an affiliate of the Massachusetts State Data Center. The division now serves as a liaison to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and will be the primary information and referral service when the governor declares a state of emergency in the Commonwealth.

In addition, CIS produces and distributes a series of publications on a diverse range of topics, with such titles as "The Citizens' Guide to State Services", "Your State Legislators", "Welcome to Massachusetts: A Practical Guide to Living in the State", and many more.

One Ashburton Place, Room 1611
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-7030 (TDD also)
1-800-392-6090 (toll-free in Massachusetts only)
Fax: (617) 742-4528
Hours: M-F, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
E-mail: cis@sec.state.ma.us
Website: *www.state.ma.us/sec/cis*

Elections Division

The Secretary of the Commonwealth is the state's chief election official. The Elections Division administers state elections, from the distribution and receipt of nomination papers to the printing of ballots for all federal, state and county elections in Massachusetts.

In addition, the division conducts public education, outreach and voter registration campaigns, and is constitutionally required to print the "Information for Voters" booklet, which describes all statewide ballot questions and which is mailed to every household in the Commonwealth.

The state of Massachusetts, through the Elections Division, has also been a national model in implementing the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, assuring polling place access for the disabled and elderly, and the National Voter Registration Act ("Motor Voter"), which establishes a state central voter registry and allows persons to register to vote at numerous public agencies throughout the state.

One Ashburton Place, Room 1705
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-2828
1-800-462-VOTE (toll-free in Massachusetts only)
Fax: (617) 742-3238
Hours: M-F, 8:45am-5:00pm
E-mail: election@sec.state.ma.us
Website: *www.state.ma.us/sec/ele*

State Bookstore

The State Bookstore, a component of the State Publications and Regulations Division, is responsible for the sale of our own documents, as well as numerous other state publications, such as the "School Directory", "List of Mortgage Rates" and "Massachusetts Election Statistics". It also has copies of recently passed state laws and a collection of souvenirs to accommodate the 100,000 tourists who visit the State House each year. Continually expanding its retail scope, the State Bookstore now averages more than $1 million in annual sales.

State House, Room 116
Boston, MA 02133
(617) 727-2834
Fax: (617) 973-4858
Hours: M-F, 8:45am-5:00pm
Website: *www.state.ma.us/sec/spr*

State House Tours & Government Education Division

Established by an act of the legislature in 1969, the State House Tours Division now guides approximately 90,000 visitors annually through the halls of the state's capitol building. It provides an Architectural/Historical Tour and a Legislative Process Tour, as well as a number of brochures explaining the history of the State House and the passage of legislation.

The division, in addition to providing State House information in eight different languages, operates a desk which assists with questions on state government, locating personnel and various tourist inquiries. It also has resource notebooks containing a wealth of information for school groups, journalists, historians and travel professionals. In addition, the Tours Division manages the operation of the State House Gift Cart, which has souvenirs, books, and other materials relating to the State House.

State House, Room 194
Boston, MA 02133
(617) 727-3676
Fax: (617) 742-4722
Hours: M-F, 10:00am-4:00pm
Website: *www.state.ma.us/sec/trs*

Massachusetts Archives & Commonwealth Museum

The Massachusetts Archives preserves access to state government records that are of long-term value to support government operations. Those records relate to government goals, objectives, and actions, or represent documentation of the state's citizens and history.

The Archives is mandated to acquire, describe, preserve, and provide access to those records, and the division's Records Management Unit works with state and local agencies to ensure that records are properly maintained. In addition, this division trains records custodians in appropriate management techniques, including the appraisal and disposition of government records.

The Archives is also the repository of more than 370 years of Massachusetts history, housing such artifacts and documents as early probate and court records, genealogical, and immigration information, and other historical data. The Archives, in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Humanities, is currently preserving and indexing several thousand records from the colonial era of 1630 to 1776.

220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125
(617) 727-2816
Fax: (617) 727-8730
Hours: M-F, 8:45am-5:00pm; Sat, 9:00am-3:00pm
Website: *www.state.ma.us/sec/arc*

Western Office

The Western Office provides many of the services which exist at the principal location of the Secretary of the Commonwealth in Boston. Residents of the four western counties of Massachusetts are able to receive and file corporate documents, take their oaths of office, file nomination papers, and obtain a variety of state publications.

In addition, staff members participate in a number of outreach programs, such as voter registration drives, corporations seminars, and securities fraud forums.

436 Dwight Street, Room 102
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 784-1378
Fax: (413) 784-1379
Hours: M-F, 8:15am-4:30pm
Website: *www.state.ma.us/sec/wes*

Other Divisions

The other divisions of the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office are Corporations, Securities, Public Records, State Publications and Regulations, Massachusetts Historical Commission, and the State Records Center.

Residency...

There is no formal procedure for establishing a legal residence in Massachusetts. Voter registration, automobile registration, a driver's license, the appearance of a person's name on a city or town street list, and rent, utility, mortgage or telephone bills normally provide tangible proof of residence. However, individual public or private agencies or institutions may have their own requirements for proof of residence.

Voter Registration...

If you are a U.S. citizen, a Massachusetts resident, and you will be 18 years old on or before election day, you may register to vote at any city or town hall in person, or by mail, by contacting any city or town clerk's office. Social service, welfare, Registry of Motor Vehicle offices, and offices providing services for the disabled also have walk-in registration services available. Colleges, universities, high schools, and vocational schools will have registration availability for enrolled students. Registration in Massachusetts is permanent, but you must register again if you move or change your name.

(For more detailed information ask the Elections Division for the publication entitled *"Registering and Voting in Massachusetts"*)

Consumer Protection...

If you have a complaint involving the purchase and/or sale of goods and services in a private business transaction, you can contact the local consumer council in your city or town. Call Citizen Information Service for locations. If your city or town does not have a consumer council, contact the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General.

The Consumer Protection Division receives and processes citizen complaints, working closely with consumer complaint groups throughout the state. To file a complaint, obtain a form directly from the Consumer Protection Division or from Citizen Information Service. The division will accept individual written complaints and take legal action if a widespread pattern of fraud is found. For more information, contact:

Consumer Protection Division
Office of the Attorney General
One Ashburton Place, 19th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-2200 or
Springfield Area Office: (413) 784-1240
www.state.ma.us/ag/ago14.htm

Consumer Complaint Section
200 Portland Street, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 727-8400

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation serves as an informational resource to consumers throughout the Commonwealth by publishing brochures on consumer rights in many areas. Titles include such topics as *Consumer's Guide to Auto Repair, Consumer's Guide to Home Improvement Planning, Consumer's Guide to Smoke Detectors, Consumer's Guide to Small Claims Court, Consumer's Guide to the Lemon Law,* and many more. The office will be pleased to send you a publication in your area of concern. For more information, contact:

Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation
One Ashburton Place, 14th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-7780
www.tiac.net/consumer/

Landlord/Tenant...

Sanitary Code

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health establishes regulations detailing the standards which must be maintained by landlords and tenants. The Sanitary Code standards, entitled *Minimum Standards of Fitness for Human Habitation*, apply to every dwelling unit or rooming house unit in Massachusetts which is used for living, sleeping, cooking and eating. For information about these regulations, call your local board of health which has the primary responsibility for their enforcement. You can also obtain from Citizen Information Service a pamphlet entitled *Safe and Sanitary Housing for Massachusetts Residents* which highlights these regulations.

Security Deposit / Last Month's Rent

When requesting a security deposit (which cannot exceed one month's rent), a landlord is required to give the tenant a receipt and statement of condition which must contain a comprehensive list of any damage existing in the premises. The deposit, upon which is based the going interest rate up to 5%, must be paid at the end of each full year of tenancy and is to be placed in an escrow account. A landlord may also request a last month's rent. The landlord is required to pay the going interest rate up to 5% interest on the last month's rent at the end of each full year of tenancy or at the end of the tenancy if less than one year. Interest on the rent for the last month which is used as a rental payment is not required. The last month's rent does not have to be put into an escrow account.

For information and referrals about housing matters, contact your local tenants groups or Citizen Information Service. The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation publishes and has available upon request *The Tenants' Commandments: Consumer's Guide to Tenants Rights*.

Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation
One Ashburton Place, 14th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-7755
www.tiac.net/consumer/

Massachusetts Tenants Association Hotline
(617) 367-6260

Employment...

Wage Requirements

The state minimum wage (effective 1/97) is $5.25 an hour. However, there are certain exceptions for students who are in working situations where sub-minimum wages are applicable.

Employers may allow a tip credit of 40% on the minimum state wage for those employees who earn at least $30 a month in tips. The cash wage that must be paid by the employer to the tipped employee is at least $2.63 an hour (effective 1/97). For more information about state wage requirements, contact:

Division of Fair Labor and Business Practices
Labor and Business Protection Bureau
Office of the Attorney General
200 Portland Street
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 727-3476

Enforcement Division
(617) 727-3465
www.state.ma.us/ag/ago5.htm

Taxation

If you are a student who lives and works in Massachusetts while attending school, you must file a Massachusetts income tax return if your income exceeds $8000. If your anticipated income is less than $8000, you may ask your employer not to withhold taxes by filing a Massachusetts Employee's Withholding Exemption Certificate (form M-4) with your employer.

On the federal level, you must file a tax return if your income is in excess of $4440. You can only claim exemption from withholding if last year you did not owe any federal income tax and had a right to a refund of all income tax withheld, and you do not expect this year to owe any federal income tax and expect to have a right to a refund of all income tax withheld. File a Federal Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate (form W-4) with your employer.

These figures are applicable to students who are single. Check with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue or the federal Internal Revenue Service for further information.

Department of Revenue
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02204
(617) 887-6367
1-800-392-6089
www.state.ma.us/dor/dorpg.htm

Internal Revenue Service
JFK Federal Building
Boston, MA 02203
(617) 536-1040
1-800-829-1040
www.irs.ustreas.gov

Student Opportunities...

The Voluntary Action Center in Boston maintains a list of a great variety of volunteer jobs. The center, which was set up for volunteers over 12 years old, has contact with approximately 700 public and non-profit agencies. For information, contact:

Voluntary Action Center
United Way of Massachusetts Bay
245 Summer Street, Suite 1401
Boston, MA 02210-1121
(617) 624-8186 or (617) 624-8000
www.unitedway.org/

City Year, an AmeriCorps program, is a national service organization which unites young adults, ages 17 to 23, from diverse racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds for a demanding year of full-time community service, leadership development, and civic engagement. The corps includes college graduates, high school graduates, and young people without high school diplomas.

City Year's comprehensive educational program includes required GED classes for corps members who have not graduated from high school, college and career counseling, and overnight training retreats. Corps members receive a weekly stipend of $125 and upon graduation are eligible for up to $4,725 in post-service awards for higher education.

City Year is an innovative and multifaceted service organization which seeks to address unmet community needs, break down barriers of class and race, inspire citizens to civic action, and strengthen the bonds of community. By tapping the energy and commitment of young people, *City Year* is "putting idealism to work."

City Year Boston
285 Columbus Avenue
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 927-2500
Fax: (617) 927-2510
www.city-year.org

The Division of Employment and Training maintains job matching centers for general employment across the state. Although the division is mainly oriented toward providing permanent employment, there are limited opportunities for temporary and/or part-time work. For more information, contact:

Division of Employment and Training
Department of Labor and Workforce Development
19 Staniford Street
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 727-8660, (617) 727-5145 or
(617) 626-5300
www.state.ma.us/det

Tax Structure...

Ch. 121, Acts of 1990 increased the following taxes.

Personal Income Tax

A 5.95 percent tax on earned income from such sources as wages and salaries; unemployment compensation; alimony; Massachusetts bank interest; rents and royalty income; taxable pensions and annuity income; IRA/Keogh distribution; profit or loss from a business or profession; and winnings and prizes. A 12 percent tax rate on unearned income such as dividends, interest (other than Massachusetts savings deposit interest), and capital gains.

A declaration of estimated tax must be filed by those who expect to receive more than $500 of income subject to Massachusetts taxation which is not subject to Massachusetts withholding.

Sales and Use Tax

A 5 percent tax on the retail sale of all items unless exempted by statute is imposed. A 5 percent tax on tangible personal property which is used or stored in Massachusetts and upon which a sales tax has not been paid is also paid. Exemptions include food, clothing up to a value of $175, fuel for heating, newspapers, and prescription drugs. In addition, there is a sales tax on telecommunications services, utilities, and energy (including non-residential electricity, gas, steam, and heating fuel).

Sales Tax on Meals

A 5 percent tax is imposed on restaurant and take-out meals.

Gasoline Tax

A tax of 10 percent on the wholesale price per gallon (with a floor of 11 cents per gallon) plus an additional tax of 10 cents per gallon is imposed.

Cigarette Tax

The Health Protection Fund (effective 1/1/93) provides money for existing health programs and creates new smoking prevention projects. The fund is supported by a surtax of 25 cents per package of 20 cigarettes and a 25 percent tax on the wholesale price of smokeless tobacco. These taxes are added on top of the excise tax of 26 cents per package of 20 cigarettes and the sales tax of 5 percent on the total cost of cigarettes.

Alcoholic Beverages Tax

A tax on alcoholic beverages based on alcoholic content must be paid.

Automobile Excise Tax

An annual tax is levied by the state but collected at the local level. The rate is $25 per thousand dollars of the car's value, as determined by the manufacturer's list price (without options) in the year of manufacture. The tax is figured according to the percentage of the list price. The percentages are as follows:

Year preceding the designated year of manufacture: 50%
Year of designated manufacture: 90%
Second year: 60%
Third year: 40%
Fourth year: 25%
Fifth and subsequent years: 10%

(For more detailed information ask Citizen Information Service for the publication entitled "Massachusetts Automobile Excise")

Financial Aid

The Board of Higher Education awards state scholarships to needy Massachusetts residents who are undergraduates attending post-secondary schools in the Commonwealth, regionally accredited schools in Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, or Vermont, or who are medical or dental students attending professionally approved graduate schools of medicine or dentistry. The board also awards honor scholarships, four to each senatorial district, based on SAT scores, to students attending a four-year college or university supported by the Commonwealth. Other special scholarships are available to children of police officers, firefighters, and corrections officers who died in the line of duty, and to war orphans of Massachusetts veterans of World War I, World War II, the Korean or Vietnam conflicts whose death was service-connected. HELP (Higher Education Loan Plan) loans are available from participating lenders throughout the state to eligible permanent residents of Massachusetts attending accredited schools. For more information, contact:

Board of Higher Education
Scholarship Office
330 Stuart Street
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 727-9420
www.mass.edu

The American Student Assistance Corporation (ASA), formerly known as the Massachusetts Higher Education Assistance Corporation (MHEAC), was established in 1956 by a special act of the legislature to assist students to finance post-secondary education. MHEAC created the Higher Education Loan Plan (HELP) by which commercial credit sources were made available for student loans whose payment was guaranteed by MHEAC. Under the Higher Education Act, the federal government subsidizes the interest rate for qualified student borrowers and provides full reinsurance of ASA's guarantees to lenders. These loans, now called Stafford Loans, are available from participating lenders who have a contractual agreement with ASA. The unsubsidized Stafford Loan Program is now available to students in good academic standing regardless of income. ASA also administers the PLUS Loan Program for parents and Supplemental Loans for Students (SLS) program for independent undergraduates and graduate students.

American Student Assistance Corporation
Berkeley Place
330 Stuart Street
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 426-9796
1-800-999-9080
www.amsa.com

The Higher Education Opportunities Information Center is a clearinghouse of information on financial aid, post-secondary education, training, and careers. It provides information and advice on a walk-in basis, by appointment, or by telephone to youth and adults. Assistance is also offered to guidance counselors, teachers, and others who are helping people plan for higher education. Located within the Boston Public Library, the center is a division of the Education Resources Institute with major funding provided by the U.S. Department of Education, 24 Boston area colleges, the Massachusetts Higher Education Coordinating Council, and the American Student Assistance Corporation. The responsibilities of the Career and Learning Line (CALL) have been integrated into the functions for the center. The center is open Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to 9:00 pm and Friday and Saturday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Higher Education Opportunities
Information Center
Boston Public Library
666 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 536-0200 or
1-800-442-1171 (in Mass only)
www.heic.org

Motor Vehicles...

Registration

Massachusetts residents are required to register their cars. You may do so at any branch office of the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Proof of ownership must be presented, in the form of the title to your car. If you come from a state which does not require titles, a bill of sale or a past registration will be accepted. Prior to registering your car, you will also need insurance certification issued by a licensed Massachusetts insurance company, indicating that your car is insured in accordance with Massachusetts laws. (For more detailed information go to our Automobile Insurance Discounts web page at *www.state.ma.us/sec/cis/cisyld/yldidx.htm*).

Registration costs $30 for two years. Note: Application for a Massachusetts title must be made at this time. The cost is $50.

Inspection

Within seven days after registering your car in Massachusetts, you must have it inspected at any gas station or automobile repair shop which has been certified by the Registry of Motor Vehicles as an official inspection station.

An inspection maintenance program requires both a yearly safety and emissions level inspection of motor vehicles. Motor vehicles that are more than 15 years old, that have a maximum speed of 25 m.p.h. or less, that have a diesel engine, that have a registered weight of 8,500 pounds or more, are motorcycles, or are new vehicles being registered for the first time are exempt from the emissions part of the inspection.

The fee for a combined safety and emissions inspection or a safety only inspection is $15.

Seat Belts

All passengers in vehicles must wear seat belts (effective 2/1/94). Violators must pay a $25 fine if a driver is stopped for another motor vehicle infraction and an officer finds that any passenger is not wearing a seat belt. Under the combined safety and emissions inspection regulations, safety belts are required for motor vehicles where such safety belts were installed as original equipment. In addition, each passenger over 16 years of age not properly fastened in will be fined individually. Children five years of age or under must be protected with an approved child passenger restraint such as an infant, toddler, convertible, or booster seat until they reach 40 lbs. Children who are 5 years of age or older **and** also weigh more than 40 lbs. must wear a seat belt. The driver will be fined $25.00 for each unrestrained child. Law enforcement officials may stop a vehicle if one or more children are riding unrestrained. No other reason is required.

Sales Tax on Automobiles

If you move into Massachusetts within six months of purchasing a new or used car, you must pay either the full sales tax on the car or the difference between the Massachusetts sales tax and that of the state where the car was purchased. More specifically, if Massachusetts:

- has a reciprocity with the state and you have proof that the sales tax was paid in that state, you have only to pay the difference between the tax rates of the two states.
- does not have a reciprocity with the state where the car was purchased, then you must pay the full Massachusetts sales tax. No sales tax has to be paid if the car was purchased out of state more than six months prior to your move.

Driver's License (Class D)

If you have a valid license to drive from any state in the U.S. or province of Canada, you are not required to take a driving test to obtain a Massachusetts license. You are, however, required to take a written examination. At a branch office of the Registry of Motor Vehicles, you may fill out an application form and make an appointment to take the written exam. If you pass the exam and an eye test, a photo license will be issued. The total cost is $68.75 and it is valid for five years. For more information, contact:

Registry of Motor Vehicles
100 Nashua Street (until further notice)
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 351-4500
1-800-858-3926 (for 508 and 413 area codes only)
www.state.ma.us/rmv/

Identification Cards...

Liquor Purchase Identification Card

If you are 21 years of age or older and you do not have a Massachusetts driver's license, you may apply for a liquor purchase identification card. Application is made in person to any office of the Registry of Motor Vehicles. The cost is $25 and renewal is necessary. The ID is valid for 5 years.

If the card is lost, the entire application procedure must be completed again. The following documents must be presented with the application:

- a driver's license, if one has been issued, and
- a birth certificate or certificate of naturalization, and
- one of the following (or two, if there is no driver's license): a school or college record with the signature of the dean attesting to the date of the applicant's birth and with applicant's signature; passport; armed services discharge papers; college I.D. card with picture and signature; employment I.D. card with picture and signature; baptismal record (not preferred but acceptable); U.S. immigration record (not preferred but acceptable).

No photocopies of any record are acceptable. Records and documents of the following type will not be accepted to establish your age: draft cards, charge cards, social security cards, health insurance cards, vehicle registration, welfare cards.

Identification Card for Non-drivers

If you are 18 years of age or older, a Massachusetts resident and do not have a valid motor vehicle license, you may apply to a branch office of the Registry of Motor Vehicles for a photo identification card. To apply for the card, you must have three documents to ascertain your identity, one of which must be a birth, baptismal, or school certificate or other satisfactory evidence of age, and one of which must contain your signature. (Refer to the above list of documents acceptable for a liquor purchase identification card). Home mortgage papers, a pistol permit, a high school year book with a person's picture or a W-2 yearly income tax form are other types of documents which are acceptable. The cost is $15 and no renewal is necessary.

Drinking Age...

The legal drinking age in Massachusetts is 21 (effective 6/1/85). Proper identification is a Massachusetts driver's license or a liquor purchase identification card issued by the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Drug Laws...

Conviction for the possession of marijuana in Massachusetts is punishable by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than six months or a fine of $500, or both. This applies to the possession of any amount.

Any person who is convicted for the first time and who has never been convicted of any offense relating to narcotic or harmful drugs shall be placed on probation unless the court files a written memorandum stating the reasons for not doing so.

Possession with intent to distribute or the manufacture of PCP or Angel Dust carries a one year mandatory prison sentence in Massachusetts.

Possession of large quantities of illegal drugs with intent to distribute carries various mandatory prison sentences based on the quantity of the drug.

The sale of drug paraphernalia in Massachusetts is illegal.

Bottle Law...

Glass, plastic, metal, aluminum and bi-metal containers holding beer and other malt beverages, carbonated soft drinks, and artificially carbonated mineral water are subject to mandatory deposit requirements. Wine, dairy products, natural fruit juices, and alcoholic beverages other than beer and malt are exempt.

The minimum refund value is five cents, and may be larger. Empty containers may be returned to redemption centers or retail outlets which sell or have sold within the past 60 days the same brand, type and size of container. For more information, contact:

Division of Solid Waste
Department of Environmental Protection
One Winter Street, 4th floor
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 292-5980
www.state.ma.us/dep/dephome.htm

Gun Laws...

Gun and firearm permits are issued by local police departments. There are three basic types of permits: a firearm identification card (F.I.D.), a license to carry, and a license to purchase. An F.I.D. card is required to own, possess, or carry (with some restrictions) a rifle, shotgun, or ammunition including mace and to own or possess a pistol (handgun) which must be kept in the person's residence or place of business. A license to carry is required to transport or carry a handgun and may also be used to possess and carry a rifle or a shotgun. Permits to purchase are issued to F.I.D. holders to buy a handgun, which, once purchased, is delivered by the local gun dealer to the home or place of business where the permit holder keeps it with the F.I.D. card. A permit to purchase conveys no right to transport or carry.

Non-residents traveling in Massachusetts with handguns are generally required to obtain a license to carry. However, non-residents traveling in the Commonwealth transporting an unloaded rifle or shotgun in a carrying case do not need a permit. Students cannot have any kind of gun in the buildings or on the grounds of any secondary school, college, or university without the written permission of the board or officer in charge of the secondary school, college, or university. People should not carry any guns loaded or unloaded away from their home or place of business unless they have the proper authorization or license. It is important to know that in Massachusetts there is a law which requires a one year mandatory jail sentence for illegally carrying a handgun, rifle, or shotgun. For more information, contact your local police department or:

Department of Public Safety
Firearms Records Bureau
200 Arlington Street, Suite 2200
Chelsea, MA 02150
(617) 660-4780
www.state.ma.us/eops/index.htm

Communicable and Venereal Diseases/AIDS

The Division of Communicable Disease Control works with 16 cooperation state venereal disease clinics in the outpatient departments of general hospitals to provide diagnosis, laboratory work, and treatment of venereal diseases. The basic services of the clinics are free of charge. For referral to these clinics, students may contact their college infirmary, private hospitals in their area, Citizen Information Service, or regional offices of the Department of Public Health.

Division of Communicable Disease Control
Department of Public Health
305 South Street
Boston, MA 02130
(617) 983-6940
www.state.ma.us/dph/

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

For information and referral, contact:

Statewide AIDS Hotline: 1-800-235-2331
U.S. Public Health Service Hotline: 1-800-342-AIDS (2437)

For information on sites in Massachusetts and scheduling for the anonymous alternative blood testing program for HTLV-III Antibody, contact:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
(617) 624-6000

For free "Facts on AIDS" leaflet write:

Public Health Service
Office of Public Affairs
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Drug Rehabilitation

The Bureau of Substance Abuse Services provides a comprehensive program for drug abuse treatment and prevention. The division also encourages statewide, regional, and local programs for the prevention and treatment of drug dependency through cooperation of interested public agencies and private organizations. Contact the Division of Alcoholism and Drug Rehabilitation or Citizen Information Service for referrals.

Bureau of Substance Abuse Services
Bureau of Community Health Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02108-4619
(617) 624-5111
www.state.ma.us/dph/subskel.htm

Mental Health

The Department of Mental Health is responsible for coordinating and providing services for the mentally ill and for citizens in need of help in coping with problems. The range of mental health care services includes outpatient counseling services, crisis intervention, inpatient care at state hospitals, residential programs, day treatment, and after care services, and social rehabilitation clubs. Services are organized on an area basis. Contact the Department of Mental Health or Citizen Information Service for a referral to the appropriate area office.

Department of Mental Health
25 Staniford Street
Boston, MA 02114-2575
(617) 727-5500
1-800-221-0053

The Samaritans is an international suicide prevention organization whose trained volunteers provide telephone befriending 24 hours a day for people who are suicidal, lonely, or depressed. Certain centers are also open for personal visits seven days a week from 9:00 am to 10:00 pm. This service is both free and confidential. It is not affiliated with any religious organization. To contact the Samaritans, call:

Boston, 500 Commonwealth Avenue: (617) 247-0220
Cape Cod area: (508) 548-8900 or 1-800 893-9900
Fall River, New Bedford area: (617) 673-3777
Framingham: (508) 875-4500
Lawrence: (978) 688-6607
Lowell: (978) 452-6733
www.cmhc.com/samaritans/Welcome.htm

Individuals with Disabilities...

The Massachusetts Office on Disability provides information and referral to handicapped individuals seeking the services of governmental and private organizations whose function is to meet the special needs of the handicapped. For more information, contact:

Massachusetts Office on Disability
Executive Office for Administration and Finance
One Ashburton Place, Room 1305
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-7440 or
1-800-322-2020

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission provides people who have disabilities with information in a variety of areas: career and educational opportunities, accessibility, financial aid, legal assistance, coping skills as well as social, recreational and travel resources. For more information, contact:

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
Fort Point Place
27-32 Wormwood Street
Boston, MA 02210
(617) 204-3600
www.state.ma.us/mrc.htm

Transportation...

Public Transportation (MBTA)

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) operates bus, trolley, and rapid transit in Boston and 78 other cities and towns. The MBTA also has a pass program open to the general public which provides passes for the lines regularly traveled by the commuter. You may obtain a pass the last five working days of each month at participating banks or at four Boston Post Office branches. For more information, contact:

General Information: (617) 222-5000
Route Maps and Schedules: (617) 222-3200
Pass Program: (617) 222-5218 or 222-5219
Recorded Service Information/Conditions: (617) 222-5050
Lost and Found: (for referral to exact line) (617) 222-5000
Complaints/Commendations: (617) 222-5216
Parking Inquiries for Commuters: (617) 727-3439
www.mbta.com/

Highways

Massachusetts has 31,300 miles of highways including the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90) which stretches the length of the state connecting Massachusetts with upper New York state and roads that lead to Connecticut. Interstate 95, which circles Boston, runs the width of the state from Rhode Island to New Hampshire. Interstate 93 connects Massachusetts with New Hampshire, and Interstate 91 connects western Massachusetts with Vermont and Connecticut.

For an official Massachusetts Transportation Map (limited supply) contact:

Massachusetts Highway Department
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 973-7800
www.state.ma.us/mhd/home.htm

For a map of the Massachusetts Turnpike, contact:

Massachusetts Turnpike Authority
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 973-7300
www.state.ma.us/masspike/

Airports

Logan International Airport is the largest passenger and air cargo terminal in New England. It is located within the boundaries of Boston. For more information, contact:

Logan International Airport
Massachusetts Port Authority
East Boston, MA 02128
(617) 561-1800 or
1-800-23-LOGAN or the individual airline.
www.massport.com/logan/logan.html

For a listing of the ***53 local airports,*** contact:

Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 973-7350

Trains / Commuter Lines

Amtrak, under the jurisdiction of the MBTA, operates two commuter rail lines offering service between Boston and major areas in the eastern part of the state.

North Shore Commuter Services leaves Boston at North Station and services communities as far as Rockport, Haverhill, Lowell, Ipswich, and Fitchburg. For more information, contact:

(617) 222-3433, 222-4465 or
1-800-392-6100

South Shore Commuter Services leaves Boston at South Station and services communities as far as Worcester, Franklin, Stoughton, and Providence, RI. For more information, contact:

(617) 222-3433, 222-4465 or
1-800-392-6100
www.mbta.com/options.html

Amtrak, a nationwide passenger railroad, offers direct service from Boston to New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Washington D.C., and other points along the eastern corridor. For fare and schedule information, contact:

1-800-USA-RAIL (482-3660)
www.amtrack.com

Buses

Massachusetts is serviced by bus companies which operate in large communities out of Greyhound/Trailways Bus Terminals and by local companies in smaller communities. Check your telephone book for your local office or terminal.

(617) 222-3200
www.mbta.com/options.html#buses

Social Information...

Tourism

The Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism disseminates information on tourist areas in the state. Specific brochures listing ski areas, agricultural fairs, and coming events in Massachusetts are also available. For more information, contact:

(617) 727-3201 or
1-800-227-MASS / 1-800-447-MASS
www.mass-vacation.com/

Recreation

The Metropolitan District Commission maintains beaches, pools, skating rinks, golf courses, fishing areas, boating facilities, bicycle paths, tennis courts, zoos, athletic fields, and historic monuments in the metropolitan Boston area. For maps and pamphlets, contact:

(617) 727-5114 (general information)
www.state.ma.us/mdc/

Performing Arts

Bostix, in Quincy Market and Copley Square, Boston, sells tickets for museums, performing arts groups, and other tourist attractions at full price. In addition, you can purchase half-price tickets for day-of-performance, nonprofit, and commercial events, subject to availability.

Hours:
Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Sunday, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

For recorded information, call:
(617) 723-5181
www.boston.com/artsboston/bostix.htm

Sports

Boston Bruins
Fleet Center
(617) 624-1900
www.nhl.com/teams/bos/index.htm

Boston Celtics
Fleet Center
(617) 523-3030
www.nba.com/celtics/

Boston Red Sox
Fenway Park
(617) 267-8661
www.majorleaguebaseball.com/al/bos/

New England Patriots
Foxboro Stadium
1-800-543-1776
www.nfl.com/patriots/index.html

New England Revolution
Foxboro Stadium
1-800-543-1776
www.mlsnet.com/inside/revolution/index.html

Boston Marathon Race Information
(617) 796-8567
www.bostonmarathon.org/

Fleet Center
www.fleetcenter.com

Holidays...

The chart below lists all legal holidays observed in Massachusetts. State, county, and municipal offices are closed on all of these days. Federal offices are only closed on holidays which the federal government recognizes (New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, George Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas). The term "federal holiday" is not applicable to individual states and the private sector since each state has jurisdiction over its holidays.

In Massachusetts certain holidays are subject to laws which restrict the type of work that may be performed as well as the kind of business and commercial activities that may remain open. Only those holidays marked with asterisks (*) have certain restrictions. On holidays listed without asterisks, business and commercial activities may operate as usual.

Please Note: Only retail establishments may open during the holidays of Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day. Retail establishments which operate on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day after 12:00 noon, or on November 11 after 1:00 pm are required to pay their employees time and one-half.

For questions on holiday laws, contact:

Citizen Information Service
(617) 727-7030 (TDD also)
1-800-392-6090 (toll-free in Massachusetts only)

Holiday	1998	1999	2000
New Year's Day	Jan. 1, Thursday	Jan. 1, Friday	Jan. 1, Saturday
Martin Luther King's Birthday	Jan. 19, Monday	Jan. 18, Monday	Jan. 17, Monday
George Washington's Birthday	Feb. 16, Monday	Feb. 15, Monday	Feb. 21, Monday
Evacuation Day (Suffolk County)	Mar. 17, Tuesday	Mar. 17, Wednesday	Mar. 17, Friday
Patriot's Day	Apr. 20, Monday	Apr. 19, Monday	Apr. 17, Monday
Memorial Day*	May 25, Monday	May 31, Monday	May 29, Monday
Bunker Hill Day (Suffolk County)	June 17, Wednesday	June 17, Thursday	June 17, Monday
Independence Day*	July 4, Saturday	July 5, Monday	July 4, Tuesday
Labor Day*	Sept. 7, Monday	Sept. 6, Monday	Sept. 4, Monday
Columbus Day* (restrictions until 12 noon)	Oct. 12, Monday	Oct. 11, Monday	Oct. 9, Monday
Veteran's Day* (restrictions until 1 pm)	Nov. 11, Wednesday	Nov. 11, Thursday	Nov. 11, Saturday
Thanksgiving Day*	Nov. 26, Thursday	Nov. 25, Thursday	Nov. 23, Thursday
Christmas Day*	Dec. 25, Friday	Dec. 25, Saturday	Dec. 25, Monday

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